The *Acharnians*

Dramatis Personae

DICAEOPOLIS ["JUST CITY"]

HERALD

AMPHITHEUS ["GOD ON BOTH SIDES"]

ATHENIAN AMBASSADORS

PSEUDARTABAS

THEORUS

CHORUS OF ACHARNIANS

DAUGHTER OF DICAEOPOLIS

SERVANT OF EURIPIDES

EURIPIDES

LAMACHUS

MEGARIAN

MAIDEN DAUGHTERS OF THE MEGARIAN

SYCOPHANT

THEBAN

NICARCHUS

MESSENGER(S)

FARMER

BEST MAN

The *Acharnians*

DICAEOPOLIS

By how many things has my own heart been stung!
And I've been pleased by few—very few—things: four.
But as for the things I've been pained by, gazillions!
Now let me see . . . what has pleased me that's deserving of . . .
    delectation?
I know what it was my heart took delight in—when I saw
The five talents[1] that Cleon[2] vomited up!
How I positively glowed at that, and I'm a friend to the Knights
On account of that deed, "for it is a thing worthy of Greece"![3]
But I felt a pain, in turn, connected with tragedy,
When I stood agape in expectation of Aeschylus,
But then the fellow announced, "Theognis, bring in the chorus!"[4]
Can you imagine how this shook my heart?!

1. A talent (of silver) was a measure of weight equivalent to six thousand drachmas.

2. Athenian politician and demagogue (d. 422 B.C.E.), active in the Peloponnesian War; Thucydides describes him as "the most violent man" in Athens (*Peloponnesian War* 3.36). There is no clear historical record of such a fine for Cleon, and it is quite possible that Dicaeopolis here refers to an event in a comedy, perhaps his own *Babylonians* of the previous year.

3. A quotation from Euripides' lost *Telephus*—the first of what are many such quotations or parodies of that tragedy here.

4. Not to be confused with the elegiac poet of the sixth century of the same name, this Theognis is an Athenian tragic poet and contemporary of Aristophanes; see 138–40 below as well as *Thesmophoriazusae* 170.

But I had another pleasure that time when, right after Moschus,
Dexitheus came on singing a Boeotian tune.[5]
But just this year I died, in fact I was tortured, when I saw
Chaeris poke his head out to do the Orthion [tune].[6]
But never once since the time I began to soap up
Have my brows been so stung by suds
As now, when the regular Assembly's to meet
At dawn—yet the Pnyx[7] here is empty,
While people chatter away in the marketplace and
Flee higgledy-piggledy the ochre-red cord.[8]
Not even the Prytaneis[9] have come, but come
They will—late—and when they do can you imagine
How they'll push and shove one another for the first row?
A torrent pouring in! But as for how there'll be peace,
They pay it no mind at all. O City, City!
But me, I'm always the very first in the Assembly

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5. The identity of both Moschus and Dexitheus is uncertain; evidently Dexitheus was a superior musician to Moschus (so Sommerstein, *Acharnians;* Olson; and the Budé ad loc.). "Moschus" means "calf," and some have speculated that the line points to Dexitheus coming on stage "dressed as a rustic" and "mounted on a young bull or heifer"; C.E. Graves, *Aristophanes, Acharnians* (1905; Exeter: Bristol Classical Press, 1982) ad loc.

6. Chaeris was a notoriously bad musician; see 866 below as well as *Peace* 951 and *Birds* 858. See also Andrew Hartwig, "A Reconsideration of the Musician Chaeris," *Classical Quarterly* 59:2 (2009): 383–97. The Orthion was a famous tune said to have been composed by Terpander.

7. The locale of the Assembly in Athens, just inside the city walls.

8. Officials tried to encourage attendance at the Assembly by (among other things) "stretching out a long ochred cord . . . which was used as a sort of dragnet, with anyone whose clothes were stained by it being subject to a fine" (Olson ad loc.). Consider also *Assembly of Women* 379.

9. The officials presiding over the Assembly.

To hurry and take my seat. And then, since I'm alone,
I yawn, I gape, I stretch myself, I fart,
I'm perplexed, I write, pluck my hair, reckon up,
While looking off to the fields, loving peace,
Loathing town, longing for my own deme,[10]
That never yet said, "Buy charcoal!"
Or vinegar, or oil, and in fact it did not know "Buy!"[11]
Instead it itself used to bring forth all things, and the buyer
wasn't there.
So now I've come, simply put, all ready
To cry out, to interrupt, to revile the orators
If somebody speaks of anything other than peace.
But the Prytaneis are here . . . it's noon!
Didn't I proclaim it? *This* is what I was talking about!
Every man's pushing and shoving for a front-row seat!

HERALD

Move forward!
Move along, so you're within the sanctified area!

AMPHITHEUS

[*To Dicaeopolis*] Has anybody already spoken?

HERALD

[*Addressing the Assembly*] Who wishes to address the Assembly?

AMPHITHEUS

I do!

10. Athens was organized into neighborhood districts or "demes."

11. "Buy" (*priō*) in this context may be either a nickname or even a proper name: "Mr. Buy" (so Wilson ad loc.).

HERALD

Who are you?

AMPHITHEUS

Amphitheus.

HERALD

Not a human being?

AMPHITHEUS

No,
But an immortal. For Amphitheus[12] was son of Demeter
And Triptolemus, and to him was born Celeus.
And Celeus married Phaenarete my grandmother,
From whom Lycinus came to be. And from him, me!
Immortal I am, and to me the gods entrusted
The making of a treaty with the Lacedaemonians,[13] to me alone!
But, since I'm an immortal, men, I don't have travel-money.
For the Prytaneis aren't giving me any.

HERALD

Police![14]

12. "This Amphitheus . . . is mentioned nowhere else in Eleusinian mythology" (Olson ad loc.), and the whole genealogy seems garbled ("wildly confused": Sommerstein, *Acharnians* ad loc.). Lowell Edmunds suggests it is "a genealogy in the Euripidean style" and hence a parody; Edmunds, "Aristophanes' *Acharnians,*" in *Aristophanes: Essays in Interpretation,* ed. Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 4.

13. That is, the Spartans, here and throughout.

14. Literally, "Archers!" or "Bowmen!" These were Scythian slaves, not Athenian citizens (see, e.g., *Thesmophoriasuzae* 1001 and following).

AMPHITHEUS

O Triptolemus and Celeus, will you overlook my [being treated this way]?

DICAEOPOLIS

Men, Prytaneis, you're committing an injustice against the Assembly
By leading away the man who was willing to make a treaty for us and hang up the shields!

HERALD

Sit down! Keep quiet!

DICAEOPOLIS

No, by Apollo, I won't!
Not if you won't put peace on the agenda for me!

HERALD

[*To the Assembly*] The ambassadors back from the King [of Persia]!

DICAEOPOLIS

"King" indeed! These ambassadors irk me, what with their peacocks and their boasts!

HERALD

Quiet!

DICAEOPOLIS

Aye yi yi! O Ecbatana,[15] what a getup!

15. The capital of Media and summer home of the King of Persia.

AMBASSADOR

You sent us to the Great King
Earning pay of two drachmas a day
In the archonship of Euthymenes.[16]

DICAEOPOLIS

Ugh, the drachmas!

AMBASSADOR

And we simply wore ourselves out as we roamed around
Over the Caystrian plains in our covered carriages,
Softly reclining on litters,
Just perishing . . .

DICAEOPOLIS

Then I must have really been safe,
Reclining on the wall's ramparts amid all the trash![17]

AMBASSADOR

And while being received as guests we were forced to drink,
From crystal and golden goblets,
Unmixed sweet wine.[18]

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16. That is, in the year 437–436 B.C.E. and hence eleven years before the performance of the *Acharnians:* the Athenian ambassadors have been on the public payroll for a long time.

17. Part of Pericles' war strategy involved having the rural population of Athens abandon their homes to the enemy and come to live within the city's walls, which led to much crowding and hardship: "Many even made their homes in the towers of the city walls" (Thucydides 2.17).

18. Greeks typically diluted their wine with water. Hence the ambassadors were "forced" to drink good wine straight.

DICAEOPOLIS

O Cranaus's city![19]
Do you perceive the ambassador mocking you?

AMBASSADOR

For the barbarians regard as real men
Only those capable of devouring and drinking the most.

DICAEOPOLIS

But with us it's cocksuckers[20] and buggers!

AMBASSADOR

In the fourth year we arrived at the palace
But he had taken the army and gone off to the outhouse,
And for eight months was crapping on the Golden Hills.

DICAEOPOLIS

At what time did he close up his butthole?
At the full moon?[21]

19. Cranaus was an early king of Athens.

20. The precise meaning of the noun (*laikastas*)—though not its obscene tone—occasioned some controversy, Henderson originally contending that the verb related to it is simply equivalent to *binein* (screw), others that it refers to fellatio, a view Henderson himself came to adopt; see A.E. Houseman, "Praefanda," *Hermes* 66 (1931): 402–12; H.D. Jocelyn, "A Greek Indecency and Its Students: *Laikazein*," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society,* n.s., 26 (1980): 12–66; and Olson, 96 (on *Acharnians* 79). Compare Henderson 153 with 249. See also *Knights* 167.

21. Some MSS give this line (without the question mark) to the Ambassador. "The expression is proverbial for 'never'" (Edmunds, "Aristophanes' *Acharnians*," 39).

AMBASSADOR

And then he went off toward home.
Then he received us as guests and set beside us
Whole oxen from a casserole dish.

DICAEOPOLIS

And who's ever seen
Ox casserole?! What boastful baloney![22]

AMBASSADOR

And, yes—by Zeus!—a bird three times the size of Cleonymus
He served up for us. Its name was "robin."[23]

DICAEOPOLIS

So you were robbing all this while getting your two drachmas a day!

AMBASSADOR

And now we've come here, bringing along Pseudartabas,
The King's Eye![24]

DICAEOPOLIS

Let a crow peck it out, and yours too, the ambassador's!

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22. Consider, however, Herodotus, *Histories* 1.133.1, where just such a menu item is mentioned.

23. The name is literally "cheat" (*phenax*), which resembles the name of the bird "phoenix." Thus "robin" and "robbin'" in English. Cleonymus is mocked by Aristophanes for his gluttony and girth; see also 844 as well as *Knights* 958.

24. A genuine office in the Persian court; consider Herodotus, *Histories* 1.114.2 as well as Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus* 8.2.10 and 8.6.16. Naturally Aristophanes interprets the title as literally as possible.

HERALD

[*To the Assembly*] The King's Eye!

[*Enter Pseudartabas, dressed in elaborate Persian finery and sporting a single huge eye in the middle of his forehead*]

DICAEOPOLIS

Lord Heracles!
In the name of the gods—hey guy,[25] are you giving me a salty-nautical look?
Or are you looking for a ship's berth as you round a cape?
You've got a porthole, I suppose, down there below your eye?

AMBASSADOR

So come now, tell us whatever it is the King has sent you
To say to the Athenians, O Pseudartabas!

PSEUDARTABAS

Iarta name xarxana pisona satra.[26]

AMBASSADOR

Did you get what he's saying?

DICAEOPOLIS

By Apollo, no, I certainly didn't!

AMBASSADOR

He contends that the King will send you[27] gold!
[*To Pseudartabas*] Now you, speak at greater length, and clearly, about "gold."

25. Literally, "O human being."
26. Gibberish meant to imitate the sound of Persian to Greek ears.
27. The plural "you."

PSEUDARTABAS

Will no goldo get, butthole-gapey Ionio!

DICAEOPOLIS

Damn! *That* he says clearly!

AMBASSADOR

So *what's* he saying?!?

DICAEOPOLIS

What, you ask? He's saying that Ionians have gaping buttholes,
If they expect gold from barbarians.

AMBASSADOR

No—rather, this fellow here's saying great "gobs" of gold "in the hold."

DICAEOPOLIS

What "gobs"?!? *You* are a big boaster!
Just get lost. And I'll put this guy to the test by myself.

[*Exit Ambassadors*]

[*To Pseudartabas*] So come on, tell it to me clearly, before *this!* [*raises a fist*],
So I won't dye you Sardian red![28]
The Great King, is he going to send us gold? [*Pseudartabas and attendants nod "no"*]
So then we're being completely duped by the ambassadors? [*Pseudartabas and attendants nod "yes"*]

28. Dicaeopolis alludes to Sardis, principal city of Lydia and part of the Persian Empire. Consider also *Peace* 1173–74.

These men here have a Greek way of nodding,[29]
And there's no way they aren't from right here!
And of these two eunuchs, this one here,
I know who he is, Cleisthenes son of Sibyrtius![30]
"O hot-tempered"[31] . . . shaver of butthole,
With *this* sort of a beard, you monkey,
You came to us fitted out as a eunuch?
But who is this guy here, surely not Straton?![32]

HERALD

Keep quiet! Sit down!
The Council invites the King's Eye
To the Prytaneum![33]

[*Exit the King's Eye and attendants*]

DICAEOPOLIS

Don't these things just make you choke?

29. Pseudartabus and perhaps the eunuch attendants "respond to the question by nodding their heads back in the gesture that for the Greeks meant (and means) 'No'" (Olson ad loc.).

30. Aristophanes repeatedly ridicules Cleisthenes because of his effeminacy and beardlessness, perhaps the latter's attempt to make himself more boyish and hence attractive to lovers. The identity of Sibyrtius is uncertain, as is therefore the joke.

31. According to the scholiast, the beginning of a line of Euripides.

32. Aristophanes mentions Cleisthenes and Straton together also at *Knights* 1373–74.

33. Housing the city's sacred hearth, the Prytaneum was used to host foreign dignitaries and returning Athenian ambassadors. Athenian citizens who had performed some signal service to the city were rewarded with free meals for life in the Prytaneum, an honor bestowed on Cleon; see also *Knights* 819.

And so then I'm to twiddle my thumbs here
While the door's never closed for [the Council] to entertain these guys?!
But I'll do a certain clever deed, and great.
But where's Amphitheus for me?

AMPHITHEUS

Right here!

DICAEOPOLIS

For me, take these eight drachmas here
To strike a treaty with the Lacedaemonians, for me alone
And my kids and my spouse.
[*To the audience*] But *you* keep sending off embassies, gaping all the while!

HERALD

Let Theorus approach, back from [the court of] Sitalkes![34]

[*Enter Theorus*]

THEORUS

Here I am.

DICAEOPOLIS

Here's another boaster announced!

THEORUS

We would not have been in Thrace for such a long time—

34. Theorus was an associate of Cleon; see also *Knights* 608. Sitalkes was king of the Odrysians, barbarians and sometime allies of Athens who were powerful in the Thracian Chersonese.

DICAEOPOLIS

[*Aside*] By Zeus, no, he wouldn't have, if he hadn't got paid a lot!

THEORUS

If the whole of Thrace had not been covered in snow
And the rivers frozen—

DICAEOPOLIS

[*Aside*] At the same time Theognis was competing here![35]

THEORUS

During this time I was drinking with Sitalkes
And in fact he was so extraordinarily pro-Athenian
And truly a lover of yours that
He even wrote on the walls, "Athenians are beautiful!"[36]
And his son, whom we made an Athenian citizen,[37]
Had a passionate desire to eat sausages from the Apatourian festival[38]
And kept beseeching his father to aid his [new] fatherland.
He swore as he poured a libation that he would come to its aid
Having an army so great that Athenians would say:
"How great a swarm of locusts draws near!"

35. The suggestion is that Theognis's poetry is as "frigid" as a Thracian winter; according to the scholiast, Theognis's nickname was "Snow." (On the term as applied to rhetoric, consider Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric* 1405b–1406b.) See also 10–11 above.

36. The formula suggests the standard way lovers addressed their beloveds ("So-and-so is handsome!"); see Olson ad loc.

37. See Thucydides 2.29: to court Sitalkes, the Athenians granted his son, Sadokos, Athenian citizenship.

38. A three-day festival celebrating the entrance of new citizens and children into "phratries" or kinship groups.

DICAEOPOLIS

Might I perish in the worst way, if I'm persuaded by any of the things
He says here—except that part about the locusts.

THEORUS

And in fact he is now sending you the most warlike tribe in Thrace.

DICAEOPOLIS

That, at least, is already clear!

HERALD

Let the Thracians come forward, whom Theorus brought!

DICAEOPOLIS

What evil is this?!?

THEORUS

An army of Odomantians.[39]

DICAEOPOLIS

Odomantians indeed! [*Looking them up and down*] Tell me, what's *that?!?*
Who pruned the Odomantians' dicks?[40]

THEORUS

If somebody pays them two drachmas,
They'll pour peltasts[41] over the whole of Boeotia.

39. A Thracian tribe; consider Thucydides 2.101 as well as 5.6.
40. Odomantians were apparently circumcised, as Greek men were not.
41. Lightly armed skirmishers.

DICAEOPOLIS

Two drachmas for these foreskin-less dicks?
Well, the mass of rowers would sure grumble,
Our city-saviors. [*The Odomantians turn on Dicaeopolis*] Hey,
wretched me, I'm a goner,
My garlic's being plundered by the Odomantians!
Won't you put down my garlic!?!

THEORUS

You bloody fool,
Don't approach them when they're garlic-primed![42]

DICAEOPOLIS

Are you Prytaneis overlooking my suffering all this—
In the fatherland and at the hands of barbarian men to boot?
But I forbid going on with an Assembly
Concerning the Thracians' pay. And I say to you that
There's a sign from Zeus: in fact, a raindrop just fell on me!

HERALD

The Thracians are to leave and be present the day after tomorrow.
For the Prytaneis dissolve the Assembly.

[*All exit except Dicaeopolis*]

DICAEOPOLIS

Ah, wretched me, so much garlic pesto I've lost!
But here's Amphitheus back from Lacedaemon!
Good day, Amphitheus!

42. Cockfighters would feed their cocks garlic to incite them to fight; see, e.g., Xenophon, *Symposium* 4.9.

AMPHITHEUS

Not yet it isn't, not till I stop running!
For I'm on the run and have to escape from Acharnians![43]

DICAEOPOLIS

What is it?!?

AMPHITHEUS

Bearing a treaty for you,
I was hastening here. But certain elders got a whiff of it,
Acharnians, tough old geezers, sturdy stuff,
Hard, Marathon-fighters, hearts of maple wood.
Then all cried out, "You bloodiest bastard,
You bring a treaty when our vines are cut up?!"
And they began to gather stones in their simple cloaks.
Me, I started to flee; they kept pursuing me and shouting.

DICAEOPOLIS

Well, let 'em shout. But are you carrying the treaty-libations?[44]

AMPHITHEUS

I am indeed, I say: here are three tastings.
This one is for five years. Take it and have a taste.

DICAEOPOLIS

Yuck!

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43. Acharnians are Athenian citizens who hail from the deme or district of Acharnae, the largest of the demes and most remote from Athens proper; see Thucydides 2.19–23.

44. The next series of jokes depends on the ambiguity of the word for "treaty" (*spondai*), which means literally the libation (wine) poured to affirm the treaty signed and, by extension, the treaty itself.

AMPHITHEUS

What is it??

DICAEOPOLIS

I don't like it because
It smells of pitch and the outfitting of ships![45]

AMPHITHEUS

Well take this ten-year one and have a taste.

DICAEOPOLIS

This one smells of embassies to the cities [in the empire],
Very vinegary, like the wearing down of the allies.

AMPHITHEUS

But this here, you see, is your thirty-year one
Pertaining to both land and sea.

DICAEOPOLIS

O Dionysia!
This one smells of ambrosia and nectar
And not of having to keep an eye out for "three days' rations,"[46]
And it says to my stomach, "Go wherever you like!"
This I accept and pour the libation and drink it down.
I bid fare-thee-well and so long to the Acharnians.
Me, I'm done with war and its evils.
I'll go and celebrate the Rural Dionysia.[47]

45. Pitch, or resin, was used not only to seal the hulls of ships but also to line wine jars and even to flavor the wine itself, as in retsina today.

46. Soldiers called to battle would be asked to bring with them three days' worth of food; see, e.g., *Peace* 312.

47. "This festival (to be sharply distinguished from the springtime City Dionysia) was held in and by the individual local communities (demes) of

AMPHITHEUS

And I'll flee the Acharnians!

[Exit Dicaeopolis and Amphitheus]

CHORUS [OF ACHARNIANS]

This way, everybody, follow, pursue him, and put a question about the man
To every passerby! For to the city it's a worthwhile thing
To seize this man. [*To the audience*] But you all reveal to me,
If anybody knows where on earth the guy with the treaty has turned.

[CHORUS LEADER]

He's fled, he's gone clean away.
Oh, wretched me, these years of mine!
In the time of my youth, when
I carried a load of charcoal[48]
And used to follow Phayllus[49] at a run, this treaty-carrier here, pursued by me then,
Wouldn't have gotten away or trotted off so lightly!
But now, since my shin is stiff
And ancient Lacrateides' legs are heavy,

Attica. . . . Since the outbreak of the war Dicaeopolis has not been able to celebrate it in *his own* deme"; Sommerstein, *Acharnians* ad loc. (emphasis original).

48. As becomes clear from the action of the play, these Acharnians depended for their livelihood on the manufacture of charcoal.

49. The name of a famous athlete who also commanded a ship at the battle of Salamis in 480; see also *Wasps* 1206.

The guy got away. But we must pursue—lest he ever laugh in our faces
Or get away from Acharnians, old indeed though we are.
He it is—O Father Zeus and Gods!—
Who made a treaty with enemies,
With whom hate-filled war, as far as I'm concerned, will only increase, on account of my lands.
And I'll not let up until, like a shaft, I'm plunged in them in revenge
Sharp, painful, and up to the hilt, so that
Never again may they trample my vines!
But we must seek the man out and look toward Poundsville[50]
And pursue from one land to the next, till he is discovered at last.
As for me, I could never get my fill of pounding him with stones!

DICAEOPOLIS

Hush, please, speak words of good omen!

CHORUS

Everyone quiet! Did you hear, men, that "hush"?
This is the very guy we're seeking! But everybody
Out of the way here. For the man's coming over, as it seems, to perform a sacrifice.

[*Dicaeopolis enters with his Wife and Daughter, together with two slaves holding a large phallus*][51]

50. Although the MSS differ here, Aristophanes evidently coins a word that blends the name of a deme of Athens (Pallene) with a verb that can mean "to strike or pound" (*ballō*): Ballene.

51. "Oversize models of an erect penis balanced on a pair of wooden carrying-poles were a standard feature of Dionysiac processions" (Olson ad loc.).

DICAEOPOLIS

Hush, please, speak words of good omen!
Let her step forward a bit, the basket-carrier.
Let Xanthias stand the phallus up straight!
Put down the basket, daughter, so we may commence.

DAUGHTER

Mother, hand up the soup ladle
So I may pour broth over this flat cake here.

DICAEOPOLIS

And that's nobly propitious indeed. O Master Dionysus!
In a manner gratifying to You may this procession
And these sacrifices be performed with the members of my household,
And with good fortune may I conduct the Rural Dionysia,
Freed of army campaigning; and may the Thirty-Year Treaty turn out nobly for me.
Come, then, daughter, beautiful as you are you'll carry the basket beautifully, with a savory-sour look about you. How blessed
Is he who will marry you and beget . . . weasels[52]
No fewer than the farts you produce, when it's just before dawn.
Lead the way! And among the crowd of people be much on your guard

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See also Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 290 and context.

52. Weasels were welcomed in Greek households for their keen ability to catch mice.

Lest anybody nibble your golden baubles, undetected by you.[53]
[*To the slaves*] Xanthias, you two must hold upright
The phallus behind the basket-bearer.
I'll follow along and sing the phallic song.
And you, wife, you look upon me from the roof. Lead the way!
O Penis, comrade of Bacchus,[54]
Fellow reveler, night roamer,
Adulterer,[55] boy-lover!
In the sixth year I greet you
As I gladly return to my deme,
Having made a treaty for myself,
Rid of troubles and battles
And Lamachuses.[56]
For it's much more pleasant, O Penis, Penis,
To catch a girl in her bloom stealing wood,
Strymodorus's Thratta[57] from the rocky ground,
Then taking her round the waist, lifting her up, tossing
Her down, plucking the flower.
Penis, Penis!

53. Henderson, *Acharnians* (ad loc.) detects in "golden baubles" (*ta chrysia*) an echo of the word for "vulva" (*kysos*).

54. That is, Dionysus, god of (among other things) wine.

55. Or, perhaps, "seducer" (*moiche*), "not just of another man's wife but of any free woman," as Olson (ad loc.) suggests. But its frequent sense of "adulterer" should not be ignored.

56. Lamachus was an Athenian general involved in the conduct of the Peloponnesian War who will soon appear in the play. Consider Thucydides 4.75; 5.19, 24; 6.8, 49–50, 101 (death of Lamachus), 103. The word for "Lamachuses" (*lamachōn*) contains the word for "battles" (*machōn*) that appears in the previous line.

57. Presumably a female slave; the name suggests a Thracian origin.

If you drink together with us, then after the boozing
From morning on you'll quaff down a cup of peace,
And the shield will be hung in the chimney!

CHORUS

There he is! That's him!
Strike, strike, strike, strike,
Beat, beat the bastard!
Won't you strike, won't you strike?!?

DICAEOPOLIS

Heracles, what's *this?!?* You're going to shatter my pot!

CHORUS

It's *you* we'll stone to death, you bloody bastard!

DICAEOPOLIS

On what charge, most reverend Acharnian elders?

CHORUS

You're asking this?!? You're utterly shameless and disgusting!
You traitor to the fatherland, you alone among us
Make a treaty, then can look me in the eye!?!

DICAEOPOLIS

But did you hear why I made the treaty? Just listen.

CHORUS

Are we to listen to *you?* Die! We'll crush you with stones.

DICAEOPOLIS

No no, at least not before you hear! Just hold on, good
fellows!

CHORUS

I will *not* hold on, and don't give me your speech.
I'm full of hatred for you even more than I hate Cleon, whom
I'll cut up into shoe leather for the Knights.[58]
And I won't listen to you giving long speeches,
You who signed a treaty with the Laconians![59] Instead, I'll get
my revenge!

DICAEOPOLIS

Good fellows! As for the Laconians, put them aside
And listen to my treaty, as to whether I concluded it nobly.

CHORUS

How could you still say "nobly," once you've made peace
With those who abide by no altar or pledge or oath!

DICAEOPOLIS

I know that in fact the Laconians, whom we lay into too much,
Are not the cause of *all* our troubles!

CHORUS

Not *all,* you dirty crook?!? So you dare say these things
Right to our faces? And then I'm going to *spare* you?

DICAEOPOLIS

Not *all,* not *all* [our troubles]. But in speaking here and now
I could affirm that in many respects *they* are actually the ones
being treated unjustly!

---

58. Though somewhat controversial among scholars, these lines may serve as an advertisement of sorts for Aristophanes' next play, the *Knights;* see Olson ad loc. and Henderson, *Acharnians,* 95 n. 42.

59. That is, the Spartans.

CHORUS

This really is a terrible utterance and disturbing to the core,
If you'll dare to speak to us on behalf of the enemy!

DICAEOPOLIS

And if I don't say what's just, and don't do so in the opinion of the multitude,
I'll be willing to speak with my head on the chopping block.[60]

CHORUS

Tell me, why are we sparing the stones, fellow demesmen,
And not shredding this man till he's a crimson robe?

DICAEOPOLIS

How black, in turn, is the smoldering charcoal that's flamed up in you!
You won't listen, you really won't listen, sons of Acharneus?

CHORUS

That's right, we won't listen!

DICAEOPOLIS

Then I'm going to suffer terribly!

CHORUS

I'd perish, were I to listen!

DICAEOPOLIS

No, no, Acharnians!

---

60. An allusion to a fragment of Euripides' *Telephus:* "Not even if someone holding an ax were about to drive it into my neck will I be silent when I have just things to say in response" (so Olson ad loc.).

CHORUS

Know that you're going to die, right now!

DICAEOPOLIS

Then . . . I'll bite you!
For in return I'll kill your nearest and dearest,
Since I have hostages against you, whom I'll get and execute!

CHORUS

Tell me, how does this remark, fellow demesmen, threaten
Us Acharnians? Surely he doesn't hold someone's child,
One of ours here, locked up inside? Why's he so bold?

DICAEOPOLIS

Strike me, if you want to. For I'll destroy . . . *this!* [*holds up a basket of charcoal*].
I'll know soon who among you has any care at all for charcoal!

CHORUS

Oh! We're done for! The charcoal basket here is my demesman!
Don't do what you're about to do, not at all, oh! Not at all!

DICAEOPOLIS

Oh, I'll kill it all right. Shout [all you like]: I won't listen!

CHORUS

Then you'll destroy this, my charcoal-pal here, my age-mate?

DICAEOPOLIS

You didn't even listen to me as I was speaking just now.

CHORUS

But say *now* whatever seems best to you, and
In what way the Lacedaemonian is a friend to you.

Because this dear little charcoal basket here, I'll never betray it!

DICAEOPOLIS

First let the stones fall to the ground for me.

CHORUS

[*Emptying their pockets*] There they are on the ground for you, and you in turn lay down your sword.

DICAEOPOLIS

But see to it there're no stones lurking in your cloaks somewhere.

CHORUS

[*Dancing a frenetic, spinning jig*] They've been shaken out, on the ground. Don't you see it being shaken?
But don't give me any excuse, just lay down your shaft.
For this here's getting shaken, as I turn about.

DICAEOPOLIS

So you all were bound to shake up [and down] your shouting,[61]
And the Parnasian[62] charcoal nearly died,
And on account of the strangeness of its fellow demesmen at that!
And through its fear, the coal basket
Has splattered me with a load of dust, like a squid!

---

61. The reading of the MSS, although most modern editors read the emendation of Dobree that would give this translation: "So you all were bound to cease your shouting."

62. Parnes is the mountain range north of Athens that supplied the wood with which the Acharnians made their charcoal; the deme of Acharnae was located in its foothills.

For it's a terrible thing that the spirited anger of men
Has grown so sour as to strike and shout
And be unwilling to listen to anything evenly balanced,
Though I'm willing to say, [with my head] on the chopping block,
Quite all that I may say in favor of the Lacedaemonians!
And yet I love my soul,[63] I do.

CHORUS

Why then don't you bring out a chopping block from inside and state
Whatever this big thing is, you rogue, that you've got?
For a great longing grips me as to whatever it is you're thinking!
But in just the way that you yourself prescribed your trial,
Set down the block here and undertake to speak.

[*Dicaeopolis goes inside and fetches a chopping block*]

DICAEOPOLIS

See? Look: here's the chopping block,
And here's the man who's going to speak, small as he is.
Rest assured, by Zeus, I won't just hide behind my shield,
But instead I'll say in behalf of the Lacedaemonians what seems to me so.
[*Aside, as soliloquy*] Yet I'm much afraid: I know the characters of the country folk,
Who take exceeding delight if somebody—a man who's a boaster—
Eulogizes them and the city, be it justly or unjustly.
And then, unawares, they get sold down the river.

63. Or simply "life" (*psychē*).

And of the elders, in turn, I know their souls—that
They look to nothing except biting with a ballot.
And as for me, I myself know what I suffered at the hands of Cleon
On account of my comedy last year.[64]
For dragging me into the courtroom,
He kept slandering me and slobbering his lies all over me
And matched the din of the Cycloborus [River] and drenched me, such that I very nearly
Perished, mixed up in his nasty business.
So now, permit me first, before speaking,
To outfit myself as piteously as possible.

CHORUS

Why are you twisting this way and scheming and making delays?
As far as I'm concerned, get from Hieronymus
Some shadowy-shaggy-thick-haired cap of Hades
And then reveal the devices of Sisyphus![65]
This contest will admit of no grounds for leniency!

[*Dicaeopolis walks off*]

DICAEOPOLIS

Now is the moment to take hold of a steadfast soul!
And I must proceed to Euripides.

---

64. A reference to Aristophanes' lost play *Babylonians*.

65. Hieronymus was a tragic and dithyrambic poet who, in addition to being hairy (consider *Clouds* 349), apparently used frightening masks in his plays. The cap of Hades made one invisible. Sisyphus, king of Ephyra (or Corinth), was renowned for his cleverness.

[*Arrives at the front door*]
Boy! Boy!

SERVANT
Who is it?

DICAEOPOLIS
Is Euripides at home?

SERVANT
He's not at home *and* he's at home, if you've got wit.

DICAEOPOLIS
How is he at home, then also *not* at home?

SERVANT
Correctly so, old man.
His mind, while gathering together little phraselets outside,
Is not at home, but he himself is at home, with his feet up,
Writing tragedy.

DICAEOPOLIS
O thrice-blessed Euripides!
Since this slave here interprets you wisely![66]
[*To the slave*] Call out to him.

SERVANT
But that's impossible.

DICAEOPOLIS
Just do it anyway.

66. Some MSS read: "Since this slave here answered so clearly."

For I won't leave. [*Servant slams the door*] But I'll knock at the door! Euripides, Euripidipides!
Lend an ear, if you've ever done so to any human being.
I, Dicaeopolis, am calling you, I from [the deme of] Cholleidae.[67]

EURIPIDES

[*From within*] But I'm not at leisure.

DICAEOPOLIS

Just have yourself wheeled about on stage.[68]

EURIPIDES

But that's impossible.

DICAEOPOLIS

Do it anyway.

EURIPIDES

Well, I'll have myself wheeled about. But I'm not at leisure to get up.[69]

[*Euripides is revealed to the audience*]

---

67. A genuine Athenian deme (see n. 10 above), but it seems to have been an urban one, whereas Dicaeopolis is from the country. Perhaps the name is meant to remind the audience of "lame" (*chōlos*), an allusion to Euripides' fondness for portraying cripples on stage; see also Olson ad loc.

68. The verb refers to a stage device, an eccyclema, a sort of platform that could be wheeled out or around to reveal a new setting onstage.

69. More literally, "to come down." Scholars divide over whether Euripides speaks from upstairs or whether he means simply that he cannot put his feet down from his reclining position.

DICAEOPOLIS

Euripides!

EURIPIDES

Why have you bellowed?

DICAEOPOLIS

You write with your feet up,
When it can be done with the feet on the ground. No wonder you write cripples!
Why do you have on the rags from tragedy,
Pitiable clothing? No wonder you write beggars!
But I beseech you, by your knees, Euripides,
Give me some little rag from an old play.
For I must give a long speech to the Chorus.
And it'll bring death, if I speak badly!

EURIPIDES

What sort of tattered garments? Surely not those in which Oeneus here,
That ill-starred old man, once competed?[70]

DICAEOPOLIS

No, not those of Oeneus, but of somebody more wretched still!

EURIPIDES

Those of blind Phoenix?[71]

---

70. Oeneus was king of Calydon and father of Meleager and Tydeus, and was deposed from the throne. "Competed" suggests that Euripides is referring to a play of his entered into competition.

71. Accounts of Phoenix differ somewhat. According to the scholiast, however, Euripides presented him as wrongly accused of making sexual advances

DICAEOPOLIS

Not of Phoenix, no,
But somebody else more wretched than Phoenix.

EURIPIDES

What sort of tattered robes is the man asking for—
Or . . . do you mean those of Philoctetes the beggar?[72]

DICAEOPOLIS

No, but of someone much more beggarly than he.

EURIPIDES

Well . . . do you want the squalid garments
That Bellerophon, that cripple, wore?[73]

DICAEOPOLIS

Not Bellerophon. But in fact the guy *was*
A cripple, beseeching, chattering, clever at speaking.

EURIPIDES

I know the man in question—Mysian Telephus![74]

---

on his father's concubine, was disbelieved by his father, and blinded as a result (see Olson ad loc.).

72. Philoctetes, son of Poias, the king of Malia, was bitten by a snake on the island of Tenedus and subsequently abandoned after his foul wound failed to heal. He is of course the subject of Euripides' *Philoctetes*.

73. Bellerophon of Ephyre and grandson of Sisyphus. Euripides' play concerning him is no longer extant. It is said that he tried to fly to heaven on the back of Pegasus in order to confront the gods over their poor providential care of the world, but he was thrown from his horse, badly injured, and subsequently died.

74. Telephus was king of Mysia. When the Greeks invaded there, in the mistaken impression they were at Troy, Telephus was wounded by Achilles.

DICAEOPOLIS

Yes, Telephus! 430
Give me his swaddling clothes, I implore you!

EURIPIDES

Boy! Give him the rags of Telephus.
They're stored above the rags of Thyestes[75]
Right by those of Ino.[76] [*To Dicaeopolis*] Here, take these.

DICAEOPOLIS

O Zeus, who sees through everything and looks down upon all, 435
Outfit me as pitiably as possible![77]
Euripides, since in fact you've gratified me in these things,
Give me also what accompanies the rags,
The little Mysian felt hat for my head.

According to an oracle, the one who wounded him would also heal him, and so Telephus proceeded, in disguise as a beggar, to Argos in search of Achilles. See Sommerstein, *Acharnians* ad loc., as well as E.W. Handley and John Rea, *The Telephus of Euripides* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1957).

75. Accounts of Thyestes vary, but according to a report of Euripides' *Cretan Women,* Atreus, king of Mycenae, discovered the affair between his wife, Aerope, and his brother Thyestes, whom he punished by having him unknowingly eat the flesh of his own children.

76. According to reports of Euripides' play concerning her, Ino, daughter of Cadmus and wife of King Athamas of Boeotia, disappeared on Mt. Parnassus. Athamas then married another woman but, on learning that Ino remained alive, brought her to his household in disguise. The new wife, Themisto, confessed to this stranger that she intended to kill Ino's two children. Ino contrived it, however, that Themisto killed her own two children instead, and she subsequently committed suicide. Athamas then went insane, killed one of his sons, and Ino leapt into the sea, being transformed into a goddess in the process.

77. This line is identical in the Greek to 384 and is for that reason excised by some editors.

For "I must seem to be a beggar today,
To be who in fact I am, but appear not to be."[78]
The spectators must know me as I am,
But those in the Chorus, by contrast, must stand there like knuckleheads
So I may give them the finger with little phraselets.

EURIPIDES

I'll give it. For you with your shrewd mind contrive subtle things.

DICAEOPOLIS

May you be happy! "But to Telephus, the things that I'm thinking!"[79]
Well done! What phraselets I'm filled with already!
But I do need a beggar's walking stick.

EURIPIDES

Take this and "depart the stony abode."

DICAEOPOLIS

[*Aside*] O Heart—since you see that I'm thrust from the halls
Though many are the implements I need—now become
Importunate, beseeching, and unctuous. Euripides:
Give me a little wicker basket that's been burned through by a lamp.

EURIPIDES

And what need, wretched you, have you of this woven thing?

78. The lines are thought to be from Euripides' *Telephus*.
79. Another parody of a line from Euripides' *Telephus*.

DICAEOPOLIS

On the one hand, no need; but, on the other, I want to have it nonetheless.

EURIPIDES

Know that you are troublesome, and be gone from my halls!

[*Euripides hands over the basket*]

DICAEOPOLIS

Ah!

May you be happy, as your mother once was.

EURIPIDES

Withdraw from me now!

DICAEOPOLIS

No, but give me one last thing,

A little cup with its lip knocked off.

EURIPIDES

Take this and blast you! Know that you're irksome in these halls!

DICAEOPOLIS

Don't you yet know, by Zeus, the sorts of bad things you yourself produce?[80]

80. Both the proper reading of this line and its interpretation have prompted debate. Olson (ad loc.) suggests that Dicaeopolis means, first, that Euripides is producing trouble for Dicaeopolis, in denying him what he needs, *and* "either that the tragedian's plays promote vicious behavior and do incalculable damage to the city . . . or (perhaps less likely) that his long-winded prologues or constant reuse of the same things makes his work tiresome."

But, sweetest Euripides, just this alone:
Give me a little pot plugged up with a little sponge.

EURIPIDES

Human being! You'll strip me of [the art of] tragedy!
Take this here and be off!

DICAEOPOLIS

I'm leaving!
[*Aside*] Yet what am I to do? For there's one thing I needs must have, and if I don't get it
I'm a goner! [*To Euripides*] Listen, sweetest Euripides,
In getting this, I'm off and won't draw near again.
Give me withered herbs for my little basket.

EURIPIDES

You'll ruin me! Here, look. My plays are clean undone!

DICAEOPOLIS

Well, there's nothing more: I'm leaving! For in fact I *am* overly
Irksome, "not opining that the ruling chieftains loathe me!"[81]—
[*Pauses*] Oh boy, wretched me! How I'm done for! I forgot
The very thing on which all my affairs depend!
Little Euripides, sweetest and dearest,
Would that I perish in the worst way, should I ask you for anything further,
Except . . . just one thing more, this alone, this alone,
Give me some chervil that you got from your mother![82]

---

81. According to the scholiast, this is a line from Euripides' lost *Oeneus*.

82. Aristophanes frequently portrays Euripides' mother as a humble seller of herbs, as she assuredly was not: *Thesmophoriazusae* 387, *Knights* 19, *Frogs*

EURIPIDES

The man is insolent! Shut the door to the halls!

DICAEOPOLIS

[*Aside*] O Heart! Without chervil you must make your way.
Don't you know how great is the contest you'll soon engage in,
Being about to speak in behalf of Lacedaemonian men?
Advance now, O Heart! There's the starting line.
You're standing still? Won't you go, having scarfed down . . .
Euripides?[83]
[*Begins to walk*] I applaud you! Come now, O wretched Heart,
Go over yonder, and then your head
Offer up there, saying whatever seems best to you yourself.
Be bold, come now, proceed! I admire my heart!

CHORUS

What are you going to do? What will you assert? Now know well
That you're a man shameless and iron-hard,
Who, while offering up your neck to the city,
Is going to speak, one man, in opposition to each and to all!
The man doesn't tremble at the affair! So now proceed:
Since in fact you yourself choose to do so, speak!

DICAEOPOLIS [TO THE AUDIENCE]

Don't hold a grudge, spectator men,
If, being a beggar, I nonetheless, in the presence of Athenians,

---

840. The words translated as "that you got from your mother" echo Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers* 750.

83. A surprise substitution for "garlic" (see 166 above).

Am going to speak about the city, while making a comedy.[84]
For when it comes to what's just, comedy too knows it.
And I'll say things terribly clever, but just.
For now Cleon won't slander me on the grounds that,
When foreigners are present, I speak badly of the city.
For we are here by ourselves, and the contest is the Lenaean,[85]
And foreigners are not yet present. For neither has the tribute come
Nor have the allies from the cities.
But we ourselves now are here, stripped of the chaff,
For the resident aliens I say are the bran of the town.[86]
[*To the Acharnians as well as the audience*] In fact I hate the Lacedaemonians intensely,
And may Poseidon, god at Taenarus,
Shake them and bring their houses down on top of them all![87]

---

84. Here and in the next line Aristophanes uses his own comical term for comedy, "trygedy," the root of which is derived from the word (*trux*) for "raw wine" or "the dregs of wine," and so may remind one of Dionysus, god of wine and of the theater. See also 628 and 886.

85. An Athenian religious festival at which five comedies and two sets of tragedies (Olson ad loc.) were presented in competition. It was held in (the equivalent of) January, a time when travel by sea was difficult. Hence the audience is made up, largely though probably not entirely, of Athenians; see also Sommerstein, *Acharnians* ad loc.

86. Dicaeopolis suggests that the citizens are the barley grain, resident aliens the bran (*achura*)—good but less good than citizens proper—while foreigners are simply the chaff. The line is controversial, however ("a notorious crux": Olson ad loc.) because the meaning of *achura* is contested, and it is excised by Wilson.

87. Poseidon was said to be responsible for earthquakes, to which Sparta and its environs were prone; see, e.g., Thucydides 1.101 as well as *Lysistrate* 1142.

For I too have vines that have been cut.
But—since those present here for the speech are friends—
Why do we blame these things on the Laconians?
For it was some of our men—I don't say the city,
Remember this, that I'm not saying the city—
Half-men lowlifes, ill-struck,
Without honor, counterfeit and alien,
Who, sycophant style, began to denounce little Megarian[88] cloaks.
And if ever they should see anywhere a cucumber or bunny
Or piglet or garlic clove or rock salt,
These were "Megarian" and auctioned off the same day.
And these things, to be sure, were petty and local,
But as for Simaetha the whore, when some youths went to Megara,
Drunk from cottabus playing,[89] they stole her away!
And then the Megarians, rendered by their pains garlic-primed feisty,
Stole Aspasia's[90] two whores in response!
And thereupon the beginning of the war broke out
For all Greeks, from three suckers of cock!
At this, in his anger, Pericles the Olympian
Sent bolts of lightning, he thundered, Greece he utterly confounded,
Posited laws written like drinking songs,

88. Neighboring Megara had been placed under a blockade by Pericles, an act that contributed to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.

89. Cottabus was a game played at drinking parties and involved tossing a bit of wine from one's cup at a target.

90. A concubine and Pericles' mistress.

To the effect that Megarians must not remain "either on land or in the marketplace,
Either at sea or on the mainland."
At this the Megarians, growing gradually hungrier,
Asked the Lacedaemonians that the decree
Be reversed, the one traceable to the cocksuckers.
But we were unwilling, though they often asked.
And then came the crashing of shields.
Someone will say: "They ought not to have." But what *ought* they have done? Say it!
Come now, if some Lacedaemonian, sailing out on a ship,
Denounced and then sold off a puppy belonging to the Seriphians,[91]
Would you have "remained seated in your halls"? Far from it!
In fact you'd have immediately launched
Three hundred ships, and the city would be full
Of the uproar of soldiers, shouting around the ships' captains,
Pay being given, figureheads of Pallas [Athena] being gilded,
A portico resounding, grains being measured,
Wineskins, oar-thongs, buyers of jars,
Garlic, olives, onions in nets,
Wreaths, anchovies, flute-girls, black eyes.
And the dockyard, in turn [would be full of] oar spars being planed,
Wooden pins resounding, [oars] being attached to the tholepins,
Flutes, boatswains, whistles, pipe sounds.
These things, I know, you would have done. "But Telephus
We suppose wouldn't have?"[92] In us there is no sense.

91. Seriphus was a small island among the Cyclades and hence (a tiny) part of the Athenian Empire.

92. Either a quotation or paraphrase from Euripides' *Telephus*.

HALF-CHORUS A

Is that so, you bloody bastard who deserves to be crushed?!
These things you—a beggar!—dare say to *us?*
And you level reproaches, if someone [among us] was a
sycophant?

HALF-CHORUS B

Yes, by Poseidon, and all that he says
Is just, and in none of it does he lie.

HALF-CHORUS A

Then even if just, is *this* the guy who ought to have said it?
But he'll get no delight in daring to say these things.

[*Half-Chorus A begins to pursue Dicaeopolis*]

HALF-CHORUS B

[*To the other half of the Chorus*] You there, where're you running
to? Won't you stay put? If you strike
This man, you'll soon be snatched up.[93]

HALF-CHORUS A

Ah! Lamachus! You with the lightning-flash look!
Appear and aid us, O fierce Gorgon-crested one!
Ah! Lamachus! Friend, fellow tribesman,
Or if there's a taxiarch or general or
Wall-battling man, let him come to our aid
In a hurry! For I'm held by the waist!

93. That is, grabbed around the waist and, by implication, lifted up and then thrown to the ground, as in wrestling (see also 571).

LAMACHUS

Whence comes the cry for a warrior I heard?
Where ought assistance to go? Where to inject Battle-Din?[94]
Who has awakened Gorgon from her case?[95]

DICAEOPOLIS

O Lamachus, hero of helmet-crests and ambushes![96]

HALF-CHORUS A

O Lamachus, isn't *this* the guy
Who for a long time now has been reviling our entire city?

LAMACHUS

[*Addressing Dicaeopolis*] You there! Do you dare, beggar that you are, to say these things?

DICAEOPOLIS

O Lamachus, hero! But have some sympathy,
If, being a beggar, I said something and prattled on.

LAMACHUS

What did you say regarding us? Won't you say?

DICAEOPOLIS

As yet I don't know.

---

94. Battle-Din (Kudoimos) appears as a character in *Peace* 254 and context, as assistant to Polemos (War).

95. Lamachus thus dubs his shield, normally kept in a case, Gorgon. The name designated one of three sisters—Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa—who had the power to turn to stone anyone who looked at them. Lamachus's shield is emblazoned with the frightening depiction of a Gorgon.

96. The word for "crests" (*lophōn*) is close to that for "ambushes" (*lochōn*).

For through fear of your armaments I'm dizzy!
But, I beseech you, [*pointing to Lamachus's shield*] take that
Mormo[97] away from me!

LAMACHUS

There, look.

DICAEOPOLIS

Now set it upside down alongside me.

LAMACHUS

There it lies.

DICAEOPOLIS

Now bring me a feather from your helmet.

LAMACHUS

[*Plucks a feather from the crest of his helmet*] Here's a plume for you.

DICAEOPOLIS

Now hold my head
So I can vomit—for helmet-crests turn my stomach!

LAMACHUS

You there, what are you doing?! You're going to vomit by using the plume?
For it's a plume—

DICAEOPOLIS

Tell me,
Whatever bird is this from? A big-mouthed-boaster bird?

97. A terrifying she-monster invoked by nursemaids and mothers to frighten children; see also *Knights* 693.

LAMACHUS

Ah, you're going to die!

DICAEOPOLIS

No no, Lamachus,
It's not a question of force. And if you *are* strong,
Why've you not peeled back my foreskin? You're certainly well equipped!

LAMACHUS

You say these things to a general—you, a beggar!?!

DICAEOPOLIS

Am I a beggar?

LAMACHUS

Well, who are you then?

DICAEOPOLIS

Who, you ask? A decent citizen, not-serious-about-office-seeking,
But since the war began, a Son of a Gun,[98]
And you, since the war began, an officer-for-hire-and-pay.

LAMACHUS

Yes, they elected me . . .

DICAEOPOLIS

Three cuckoos did, that is!
So, being disgusted at these things, I struck up a truce,
Seeing gray-haired men in the lines of battle,

98. A comic patronymic suggesting that he is the offspring of a good soldier.

And the young such as you run away,
Some getting three drachmas pay in the region of Thrace—
Teisamenus-Phaenippus, Rogue-Hipparchides—
And others with Chares, some among the Chaonians—
Geres-Theodorus, Boaster-from-Diomeia—
Others in Camarina and Gela and Catagela.[99]

LAMACHUS

Yes, they were elected!

DICAEOPOLIS

But what's the cause
Of you're always getting pay somehow or other
But these fellows here [*pointing to Half-Chorus A*] get nothing?
Really, now, Marilades,
Have *you* ever served as ambassador, gray as you are?
He nods "no"—and yet he's prudent and hardworking.
And what about Anthracyllus or Euphorides or Prinides?[100]
Who among you has seen Ecbatana or the Chaonians?
They deny it. But the son of Coisyras[101] and Lamachus have;

99. None of the people mentioned and mocked here can be identified with certainty. Chaonians were a barbarian and warlike people of Epirus in northwest Greece; probably more important is the fact that their name suggests the verb meaning "to gape" (*chaskein*). Camarina and Gela were Greek cities on the island of Sicily. Catagela is a made-up word suggesting the word for "ridiculous" (*katagelos*).

100. These proper names include the words for "charcoal," "good carrier," and "oak": i.e., salt of the earth types.

101. A woman connected to the family of Megacles and hence the bluest of blue bloods: an aristocratic fellow is thus lumped together with Lamachus. Consider also *Clouds* 48 and 800.

And just the other day, on account of their loans and their debts,
Like those who pour out the evening's dirty wash water,
Quite all their friends advised, "Keep your distance!"

LAMACHUS

O democracy! Are these things to be tolerated?

DICAEOPOLIS

No indeed—unless Lamachus gets his pay!

LAMACHUS

Well, anyway, I, against all the Peloponnesians,
Will ever wage war and everywhere cause havoc,
With both ships and infantry, with all my might!

DICAEOPOLIS

And I make a public proclamation to the Peloponnesians,
To quite all of them, as well as to the Megarians and Boeotians,
To offer to sell in my marketplace—but not to Lamachus!

[*Exit Dicaeopolis and Lamachus*]

CHORUS

The man is victorious with his arguments and persuades the demos
About the treaty. But let us strip and proceed to the anapests.[102]

102. The members of the Chorus now remove their cloaks, which in the context means that they will become a chorus of actors and no longer be Acharnian elders. The prelude (626–27) and the chorus-leader's speech (628–64) are in anapestic tetrameters.

From the time when our producer[103] took charge of the comic[104] choruses
Never yet has he come forward intending to say how clever he is.
But being slandered by enemies, among Athenians too-hasty-in-counsel,
On the grounds that he's making a comedy of our city and treating the demos with utter insolence,
He must now offer a response to Athenians given to changing their minds.
And he asserts that he's the cause of many good things for you, the poet does,
By keeping you from being overly deceived by the speeches of foreigners,
And from the pleasure you take in subtle flattery, and from being slack-jawed-gaping-citizens.
Before, the ambassadors from the [subject] cities quite deceived you,
First by calling you "violet-crowned."[105] And when someone should say this,
Immediately, on account of those "crowns," you sat on the tips of your little butt cheeks.
But if somebody, subtly flattering you, should call Athens "gleaming,"

103. Literally, "the teacher" (*didaskalos*), the usual term for the person responsible for training and directing the actors. Aristophanes has himself in mind.

104. More literally, "trygic," Aristophanes' comic term for comedy; see also n. 84 above.

105. An epithet of Athens in Pindar. Consider also *Knights* 1323 and 1329.

He 'd gain everything on account of those "gleamings," by attaching an honor belonging to smelts!
So, having done these things, [the poet] has become the cause of many good things for you,
And he's shown how the populaces in the [subject] cities are "democratically" governed.[106]
So now, that's why those who bring the tribute to us from the cities
Will bring it—because of their desire to see the poet who's best,
He who ran risks among Athenians in order to state the just things.
And in this way fame of his daring has already reached far and wide,
Since even the King [of Persia], in testing the embassy from the Lacedaemonians,[107]
Asked them, first, which of the two is stronger in ships,
And then about which of the two this poet lambastes more.
For [the King] said that these human beings have become much better
And would greatly prevail in the war because they have him as advisor.
For these reasons Lacedaemonians are proposing peace with you
And demanding the return of Aegina: as for that island,
They give it no thought, except so they can take this poet away![108]

---

106. Interpretations of this line differ, but Aristophanes may be suggesting how undemocratically Athens has governed them in fact. The word for "populaces" here is *demoi,* the plural of *demos.*

107. Consider Thucydides 4.50.

108. At some point subsequent to defeat at the hands of Athens in 459, Aegina was promised an autonomy that never materialized. Accordingly, prior to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, Aegina complained to Sparta and

But now don't *you* ever let him go, since he'll make a comedy of the just things!
And he affirms that he'll teach[109] you many good things, so you'll be happy,
Not flattering, or setting out the prospect of pay, or fooling you through and through,
Nor acting nastily nor sprinkling with praise, but teaching the things that are best.
Given these things, let Cleon skillfully manage
And contrive everything against me.
For what's good and what's just, here with me,
Will be my ally, and there's no way I'll ever be caught
Being such as he is when it comes to the city:
A coward and a bugger supreme!

CHORUS [OF ACHARNIANS]

Come hither, flaming Muse
Possessed of the strength of fire,
Intense, Acharnian!
As from oaken charcoal
A spark leaps up, roused
By a fan's favorable breeze,
When the sprats
Are laid out

urged it to begin hostilities with Athens; see Thucydides 1.67 as well as 1.139. The line also suggests some connection between Aristophanes and Aegina—though no one is certain quite what.

109. See n. 103 above: he will teach the audience by putting on his plays.

And some are mixing up a Thasian [*sauce*] "of gleaming
fillet,"[110]
Others are kneading the dough—so come,
And a lively tune,
Vigorous, most apt for the country,
Bring to me, your demesman.
We who are old, ancient, we blame the city.
For we are not tended to by you in our old age,
In a manner worthy of the naval battles we fought, but instead
suffer terribly.
Some throw old men into indictments
And by youthful orators let them be ridiculed,
[Old] men who are nothing, but mute and played out,
Whose walking stick is Poseidon Unstumbling.[111]
Mumbling in old age we stand alongside the stone,[112]
Seeing nothing of the legal suit except its shadow.
But the young fellow, eager to plead his own case,
Quickly strikes with rounded words as he joins the fray,
And then dragging [the old man] up he cross-examines him,
setting up word-snares,

110. Pindar's epithet for the Muses in *Nemean* 7.15. According to the Budé, the oil in the sauce or marinade would cling to the fish and so form a gleaming band.

111. Said to be a standard epithet of Poseidon. "The joke is that the only security . . . the old men have any longer against stumbling . . . is their walking-sticks" (Olson ad loc.).

112. Perhaps the stone on which a defendant would be asked to stand in court, perhaps "the stone on which jurors' voting-pebbles were counted" (Olson ad loc., quoting Wilhelm Wachsmuth).

Taking to pieces and confounding and mixing him up, a man
[as old as] Tithonus.[113]
But he, through old age, purses his lips and then leaves convicted
and fined.
He then sobs and cries and says to his friends,
"That with which I ought to have bought my coffin, this I leave
owing in fines!"
How are these things reasonable—to destroy
A gray old man 'round the water clock,[114]
One who's toiled much with you and wiped away hot
Manly sweat, and much of it indeed,
Being a good man at Marathon, for the city?
Then, when we were at Marathon, *we* were the ones to pursue,
But now by very base men we're *being* pursued[115]
And getting caught-and-convicted!
What Marpsias[116] will speak against these points?
How is it reasonable that a stooped man, of the age
Thucydides is,[117]
Is utterly ruined, in coming to grips with the desolate wilderness
of Scythia,

113. Tithonus was a son of King Laomedon of Troy, renowned for his beauty. Dawn (Eos) fell in love with him and asked Zeus to grant Tithonus eternal life. Unfortunately, she did not ask also for Tithonus to enjoy eternal youth, and he grew ever older.

114. A device used to time courtroom speeches; see, e.g., Plato, *Theaetetus* 172e1.

115. The same word for "pursue" can also mean "prosecute."

116. Unknown outside comedy, the name may be a nickname ("Snatcher," "Grabber").

117. Not the historian but the aristocratic politician, a contemporary of Pericles and his opponent.

By that son of Cephisodemus, the chattering prosecutor?[118]
And so, I felt pity as a result and wiped away a tear when I saw
The elderly man rendered confused by a bowman[119]
Who, by Demeter, when he was *the* Thucydides [in his prime],
Would not have easily put up with Achaia herself[120]
But would have first wrestled down ten Euathluses[121]
And shouted down with a roar three thousand bowmen
And outshot the kin of [Euathlus's] father.
But since you don't permit the old men to get any sleep,
Vote that their indictments be separate, so that
The old man's prosecutor would be old and toothless,
The young men's would be the son of Cleinias, wide buttholed and chattering.[122]

---

118. After being ostracized from Athens in the late 440s, Thucydides evidently was prosecuted on an unknown charge (either by Cephisodemus or his son; the text here is uncertain), and became tongue-tied in the course of his defense speech (see *Wasps* 946–48). The text also suggests that Cephisodemus (or his son) had a Scythian mother, whether she was actually from Scythia or, as the term also meant, was blonde and hence foreign; see Olson ad loc.

119. Scythians were known for fighting with bow and arrow.

120. An epithet of Demeter. Commentators are baffled by the line ("The puzzle of this line remains unsolved": Wilson ad loc.), and emendations have been suggested. Lowell Edmunds (following E. K. Borthwick) suggests reading Artachaiēn instead of Achaian of the MSS: Artachaees was a great nobleman said to be the tallest of all the Persians with the loudest voice in the world (Herodotus 7.117).

121. Identity uncertain. He may have been a demagogue (*Wasps* 592) responsible for the prosecution of the sophist Protagoras on a charge of impiety.

122. "The son of Cleinias" is Alcibiades, ward of Pericles, sometime student of Socrates who appears in four Platonic dialogues, and later an Athenian general who managed to ally himself with three sides in the course of the Peloponnesian War—Athens, Sparta, and Persia—before being recalled to Athens.

And in future—if somebody evades this, then fine him—old man
should be banished by old man, young by young.

DICAEOPOLIS

These are the boundaries of my market.
Here all the Peloponnesians are permitted to trade,
Megarians as well as Boeotians too,
On condition that they sell to me but not to Lamachus.
As market-regulators of the place I appoint
These three who've been allotted leather whips from Flogville.
Let enter here neither sycophant
Nor any other Phasian[123] man.
And as for the stele,[124] bearing the terms of the treaty I signed,
I'll go get it, to set it up in the market plain as day.

[*Dicaeopolis goes into his house*]

MEGARIAN[125]

Hello, Athenian market, dear to Megarians!
I was longing for you, by the God of Friendship,[126] as for a
mother.
But, you pitiable little girls of a miserable father,
Come up here for the barley-cake, if you find some somewhere.

123. Phasia was "the easternmost city on the southern coast of the Black Sea" (Olson ad loc.), but the name in this context is meant to recall the word for "denunciation" (*phasis*).

124. An upright stone pillar on which public decrees were inscribed.

125. The Megarian speaks in a dialect throughout, impossible to convey in translation. For Pericles' blockade of Megara, which imposed great hardships on the city, see n. 88 above and Thucydides 1.67 and 1.139.

126. One of the epithets of Zeus.

So listen, turn to me the attention of your . . . stomach.
Do you want to be sold or badly to starve?

GIRLS

Sold! Sold!

MEGARIAN

I myself say so too. But who'd be so foolish
As to buy you, an obvious loss?
But . . . I have a certain Megarian trick!
For I'll assert that I'm bringing you decked out as pussy kittens![127]
Put on these pussies' paws
So that you seem to be from a good cat.
Because, by Hermes, if in fact you come home
Unsold, you'll undergo evil starvation.
But put on these whiskers, too,
And climb into the burlap sack here.
And see that you mewl and meow
And let loose the sound of pussies at the Mysteries![128]
I'll announce Dicaeopolis's name [and find out] where he is.
[*Calling out*] Dicaeopolis, do you want to buy some little pussies?

DICAEOPOLIS

What's this? A Megarian man?

---

127. Literally, "piglets," here and throughout the section, a term that is also Greek slang for the female genitalia.

128. The Eleusinian Mysteries were important initiation rites connected to the cult of Demeter and Persephone. The line alludes more specifically to "events on the second day of the Greater Mysteries . . . when initiands took a piglet down to the sea, washed it and themselves there, and most likely sacrificed it upon their return to the city" (Olson ad loc.).

MEGARIAN

We've come to trade in your market.

DICAEOPOLIS

How are you[129] doing?

MEGARIAN

We spend our time continually fasting by the fire.

DICAEOPOLIS

Well, that's pleasant, you know, by Zeus—continually
feasting[130]—if there's a flute nearby!
But what else are the Megarians doing now?

MEGARIAN

Well, such as we do.
When I was making my way from there,
The Councilmen were doing this for the city:
Seeing how we might perish as quickly and badly as possible!

DICAEOPOLIS

Soon you'll be rid of your troubles.

MEGARIAN

Of course!

---

129. The plural "you."

130. The Megarian uses a word that appears nowhere else in Greek (*diapeinames*) and means roughly "continually starving," but, perhaps on account of the Megarian's accent, Dicaeopolis hears instead *diapinomen* (continually drinking). Thus "fasting/feasting," following the clever suggestion of Jeffrey Henderson (Henderson [Loeb] ad loc.).

DICAEOPOLIS

What else is up at Megara? What's the price of grain?

MEGARIAN

With us it's as expensive[131] as the gods!

DICAEOPOLIS

So then are you bringing salt [to sell]?

MEGARIAN

Don't you rule over it?[132]

DICAEOPOLIS

Not garlic either?

MEGARIAN

What garlic?!? You always,
Whenever you invade, like field mice,
Dig up the bulbs with pegs!

DICAEOPOLIS

So what *are* you bringing?

MEGARIAN

I've got pussycats used in the Mysteries!

DICAEOPOLIS

What you say is fine. Show them.

MEGARIAN

Well, they're beautiful.

131. The word for "expensive" can also mean "much honored" (*polytimatos*).

132. The word for "salt" can also mean the (briny) sea; Megarian thus alludes to the Athenian naval empire that is strangling Megara.

Reach out to touch, if you like. How plump and beautiful! [*The Megarian brings his daughters out of the sack*]

DICAEOPOLIS

What's *that?!?!*

MEGARIAN

A pussy, by Zeus!

DICAEOPOLIS

What do you mean? Where'd this pussy come from?!?

MEGARIAN

It's Megarian!
Or isn't that a pussy?

DICAEOPOLIS

Doesn't appear to be to me, at least!

MEGARIAN

[*To the audience*] Isn't this terrible? See how distrusting he is! 770
He denies that this is a pussy! [*To Dicaeopolis*] But,
If you like, make a bet with me, for a wager of seasoned salt,
That this isn't a pussy, according to Greek custom.[133]

DICAEOPOLIS

But it's of a human being![134]

---

133. Or "law" (*nomos*). What cannot be proved according to nature can evidently be proved according to *nomos*.

134. The phrase is ambiguous; it could mean "born of a human being" or "belongs to a human being," and the Megarian of course takes it in the latter sense.

MEGARIAN

Yes, by Diocles,[135]

She's mine! Whose does she seem to you to be?

Do you want to hear her make some noise?

DICAEOPOLIS

Yes, by the gods,

I certainly do!

MEGARIAN

Quick, make some noise, little pussy! [*The girl remains silent*]

You don't want to? You're keeping quiet?!? Damn you in the worst way!

I'll cart you off back home again, by Hermes!

GIRL

Meow! Meow!

MEGARIAN

So is that a pussy or what?

DICAEOPOLIS

For the moment, at least, she does seem to be a pussy . . .

But once grown up she'll be a snatch!

MEGARIAN

Within five years,

Know it well, she'll resemble her mother!

---

135. Legendary king of Eleusis who was driven from there to Megara, where he subsequently died in battle defending his lover, for which act he was subsequently honored.

DICAEOPOLIS

But this one here isn't fit for sacrifice.[136]

MEGARIAN

Of course she is!
In what way isn't she?

DICAEOPOLIS

She doesn't have a tail![137]

MEGARIAN

For she's young! But once grown to full pussyhood,
She'll take a big thick pink one!
But if you want to raise one, this pussy here is beautiful! [*Displays his other daughter*]

DICAEOPOLIS

How this one's snatch is akin to the other one's!

MEGARIAN

Yes, for they have the same mother and father.
And if she plumps up and becomes downy with hair,
She'll be a most beautiful pussy to sacrifice to Aphrodite!

DICAEOPOLIS

But a pussy isn't sacrificed to Aphrodite![138]

---

136. Pigs (though not cats) were among the animals used for religious sacrifice, including at the Mysteries (747).

137. The term is also slang for "penis."

138. Piglets (as the Greek is) were sacrificial animals, but evidently not to Aphrodite, goddess of erotic love. The scholiast suggests that because Aphrodite's lover, Adonis, was killed by a boar, the sacrifice of a pig would not be pleasing to her.

MEGARIAN

Not a pussy to Aphrodite?! To her alone of the divinities!
And the flesh of these pussies becomes
Most pleasant, when it's pierced with a skewer!

DICAEOPOLIS

And by now they'd eat without their mother?

MEGARIAN

Yes, by Poseidon! And without their father too!

DICAEOPOLIS

And what especially do they eat?

MEGARIAN

Anything you might give them.
But you yourself ask!

DICAEOPOLIS

Kitty kitty!

GIRL

Meow! Meow!

DICAEOPOLIS

Would you nibble on chickpeas?[139]

GIRL

Meow meow meow!

DICAEOPOLIS

What about this? Phibalean figs?

139. A "chickpea" is also a slang term for "penis"; see, e.g., *Frogs* 545.

GIRL

Meow! Meow!

DICAEOPOLIS

[*To the other daughter*] What about you? Would you yourself eat them?[140]

SECOND GIRL

Meow meow!

DICAEOPOLIS

How shrilly you clamor at the mention of "figs"!
Let someone bring out some figs from inside
For the little pussycats! Will they nibble them? [*Figs are tossed to the girls*] Damn!
How they go to town on them, most honored Heracles![141]
Where are these pussies from?!? From Nibblesville, as it appears![142]

MEGARIAN

[*To the audience*] But they didn't scarf down *all* the figs.
For I nabbed *this* one from them!

140. This line and the next are uncertain and have prompted much commentary and emendation. Both the proper reading of the text and its attribution are at issue.

141. The word for "most honored" is the same as that translated as "expensive" above at 759; see n. 131. Aristophanes depicts Heracles as having a voracious appetite; see, e.g., *Frogs* 549 and following, as well as *Birds* 1604.

142. From Tragasai, a city located in the Troad, but it suggests a link to the verb *tragein* (to nibble).

DICAEOPOLIS

By Zeus, they are two charming creatures!
At what price may I buy these two little pussies? Just name it.

MEGARIAN

This one here for a bunch of garlic,
The other one, if you like, for just a measure of salt.

DICAEOPOLIS

I'll buy 'em from you! Wait here!

[*Dicaeopolis leaves*]

MEGARIAN

Okay . . .
Hermes [God of] Commerce![143] May I give up
At this price my wife and my own mother too!

SYCOPHANT

Hey guy,[144] where're you from?

MEGARIAN

Megarian pussy-seller.

SYCOPHANT

Well, I denounce these little pussies here
As belonging to the enemy—and you too!

143. One of the traditional epithets of Hermes; see, e.g., *Knights* 297 and *Wealth* 1154. A bronze statue of Hermes stood in the Athenian agora or marketplace.

144. Literally, "human being."

MEGARIAN

Here we go again: back
To the beginning from which our troubles grew!

SYCOPHANT

You'll be weeping if you pull a Megarian! Let go of the sack!

MEGARIAN

Dicaeopolis! Dicaeopolis! I'm being denounced!

DICAEOPOLIS

[*Running out of his house*] By whom? Who's denouncing you?
Market-regulators,
Keep the sycophants away from the house!
What's put it into your head to bring things to light without a wick?[145]

SYCOPHANT

I'm not to denounce the enemies?!?

DICAEOPOLIS

You'll weep if you do,
Unless you run off and do your sycophantic stuff somewhere else!

[*Sycophant runs off*]

MEGARIAN

Such is the evil that's present in Athens!

145. The line depends on the ambiguity of the verb *phainesthai,* which means "to bring to light or cause to appear" but also (in a legalistic context) "to denounce." It may be that the Sycophant is not wearing the usual phallic appendage characteristic of comedy and so lacks his "wick."

DICAEOPOLIS

Be of good cheer, Megarian. Take what you got for the little pussies,
This garlic here and the salt,
And fare-thee-well!

MEGARIAN

But *that's* not native to us!

DICAEOPOLIS

[Am I being] meddlesome now? Let it be on my head.[146]

MEGARIAN

O Little Pussies, try even without your father
To keep banging your flat cake with salt, if somebody gives you one.[147]

CHORUS

Happy is this human being!
Didn't you hear how
The matter of his plan is progressing?
For the man will reap fruits
As he sits in the marketplace

146. Imperial Athens was often charged with being "meddlesome," a busybody—but the precise meaning of the line is controversial ("difficult": Wilson ad loc.). Edmunds, "Aristophanes' *Acharnians*," 39, suggests reading *polycharmosunē* instead of *polypragmosunē* of the MSS and giving it (and the next word) to the Megarian: "But *that's* not native to us. There's much warmongering."

147. This somewhat cryptic line has prompted considerable commentary. Henderson suggests that the line also means "to bang your cunt against the phallus, in case someone should give you any" (*Maculate Muse,* 113).

And if some Ctesias[148] enters,
Or other sycophant,
That guy will wail when he sits down!
And no other human being,
By undercutting your prices, will bring you to ruin at all,
Nor will Prepis[149] wipe off
His wide buttholedness on you,
Nor will you collide with Cleonymus.[150]
But, wearing a shiny clean cloak, you'll go about
And Hyperbolus[151] won't encounter you,
Infecting you with lawsuits!
And Cratinus lighting upon the marketplace
Won't approach you as he walks,
He who is always shaved, adultery-style, with a single blade,[152]
An exceedingly nasty Artemon,[153]
Overly hasty with his Musical art,
His armpits smelling badly,

148. The name is common and suggests a connection to the verb "to acquire" (*ktaomai*).

149. Identity uncertain; perhaps a wealthy and politically prominent Athenian.

150. See 88–89 above: a glutton of impressive girth.

151. The leading demagogue in Athens after the death of Cleon. See also *Knights* 1304 and 1363.

152. Cratinus was a comic poet against whom Aristophanes competed; see also 1172. Either Cratinus is attempting what he thinks is a stylish cut, or his haircut resembles that of a punishment meted out to adulterers: having their head shaved.

153. A contemporary of the poet Anacreon, who ridiculed Artemon as "borne about in a litter" (*periphorētos*), which Aristophanes transforms into "exceedingly nasty" (*periponēros*).

Son of a father from Goatstown.[154]
Nor again, in turn, will you be mocked
By Pauson[155] that altogether nasty fellow,
And neither will Lysistratus, in the marketplace,
The reproach of Cholargus,[156]
Deeply dyed in evils,
Ever freezing and starving
For more than thirty days each month!

[*Enter a Theban man with his servant, Ismenias, both heavily laden with goods and accompanied by flute players*]

THEBAN[157]

May Heracles witness, my shoulder hurts badly!
Set down your mint gently, Ismenias, and you, all you flute players from Thebes,
Blow on those bones, "The Dog's Butthole"! [*They begin to play*]

DICAEOPOLIS

[*Coming out of his house*] Stop! To the crows with you! You wasps, won't you get away from the doors!?!

---

154. *Tragesai:* the root of the name suggests *tragos,* a male goat. Hence Cratinus's armpits smell like goats.

155. A painter of comic or satirical works.

156. The identity of this impoverished Lysistratus is uncertain; he may have been an Athenian orator; see also *Knights* 1267. Cholargus was the name of one of the demes or districts of Athens.

157. The Theban speaks throughout in Boeotian dialect and with a heavy accent.

These buzzing bagpipers—be damned!—where'd they fly from
To my door, sons of Chaeris?![158]

THEBAN

By Iolaus,[159] you've done me a favor, stranger,
For they've been following behind me from Thebes, blowing away,
The mint blossoms they've shaken to the ground.
But if you're at all willing, buy what I'm carrying,
The chicks or the four-winged creatures.[160]

DICAEOPOLIS

Greetings, roll-eating little Boeotian!
What are you carrying?

THEBAN

All that's simply good in the eyes of Boeotians:
Marjoram, mint, reed mats, wicks,
Ducks, jackdaws, francolins, coot birds,
Plovers, dabchicks.

DICAEOPOLIS

Just like a fowl storm, then,
You've blown into the marketplace!

THEBAN

Indeed, and I'm carrying geese, hares, foxes,
Mole rats, hedgehogs, cats, badgers,
Martens, otters, Copaic eels![161]

158. See 15–16 above: a notoriously bad musician whom Dicaeopolis loathes.

159. Heracles' nephew and a fellow hero.

160. Probably locusts or cicadas.

161. As Dicaeopolis's reaction suggests, this last in the list was regarded as a delicacy. Lake Copais was in Boeotia.

DICAEOPOLIS

O You who bring the most delightful slice of fish for human beings!
Allow me to say hello to the eels, if you're carrying them!

THEBAN

[*Addressing the eels*] Eldest of fifty Copaic maidens![162]
Come out here and grant your favors to the stranger!

DICAEOPOLIS

[*Addressing an eel*] O You who are dearest and longed for, for a very long time now!
You've come, longed for by the comic[163] choruses
And dear to Morychus![164] Servants, bring out
The brazier and the fan here for me.
Examine, children, the best eel,
Who's finally come after six years, though longed for [all the while]!
Say hello to her, kids. And the charcoal I'll
Supply you, for the sake of this lady guest here!
But bring her out, for "not even when dead
Would I be apart from you,"[165] when you're wrapped up in beet-greens!

---

162. According to the scholiast, this is a parody of a line from a lost play of Aeschylus.

163. More literally, "trygic," Aristophanes' comic term for comedy; see nn. 84 and 104 above.

164. A notorious glutton: *Peace* 1008–9.

165. A parody of Euripides, *Alcestis* 367–68.

THEBAN

Where will my payment for these things come from?

DICAEOPOLIS

You'll give her to me, I suppose, as a market fee!
But if you're selling these other things here [*points to the many goods the Theban has brought*], say so!

THEBAN

I'm selling all these.

DICAEOPOLIS

Come then, how much do you say?
Or will you take back this other merchandise from here [in exchange]?

THEBAN

Whatever's in Athens but not found among the Boeotians!

DICAEOPOLIS

Sprats from Phaleron, then, you'll buy and take back,
Or pottery.

THEBAN

Sprats or pottery? But they're there [in Thebes].
Instead, what we don't have, but there's a lot of [here].

DICAEOPOLIS

I've got it! Take back a sycophant,
Once you've packed him up like pottery!

THEBAN

Yes, by the Twins![166]

166. Presumably Amphion and Zethus, mythical founders of Thebes.

I'd get a lot of profit, bringing him back,
Full of much mischief, like a monkey!

DICAEOPOLIS

And indeed there's Nicarchus, coming to denounce us!

THEBAN

The guy's short in stature!

DICAEOPOLIS

But bad head to toe!

NICARCHUS

Whose goods are these?

THEBAN

They're mine,
From Thebes, may Zeus witness!

NICARCHUS

I, here and now,
Denounce these things as belonging to the enemy!

THEBAN

What's the matter with you,
That you declare war on little winged birds and do battle?

NICARCHUS

And you *too* I denounce, in addition to these things!

THEBAN

What injustice have I committed?

NICARCHUS

I'll tell you "for the sake of those assembled."[167]
You're importing wicks from the enemies!

DICAEOPOLIS

So then you denounce him on account of a wick?

NICARCHUS

For it could set the shipyard ablaze!

DICAEOPOLIS

A shipyard by means of a wick!?!

NICARCHUS

I think so.

DICAEOPOLIS

In what way?

NICARCHUS

A Boeotian man, setting it on a cockroach
And lighting it, could send it into the shipyard
Through a drain hole, keeping a watch out for a big northerly wind.
If in fact the fire should touch the ships once,
They'd immediately be set alight![168]

DICAEOPOLIS

O perish in the worst way! [*Dicaeopolis starts to whale on Nicarchus*]
They'd be set alight by a cockroach and a wick?!?

167. A formula used by orators.

168. Consider Thucydides 4.100 for an example of Theban pyrotechnics in warfare.

NICARCHUS

I call witnesses!

DICAEOPOLIS

Arrest his mouth!
Give me some trash so that, in packaging him up, I can pass him along,
Just like pottery, so he doesn't break while in transit!

CHORUS

Pack up, O Best Fellow,
The merchandise finely for the stranger
So that carrying him in this way he won't break him!

DICAEOPOLIS

I'll take care of these things, since
In fact he's making a certain chattering and
The sound of cracking in the kiln
And is otherwise hateful to gods!

CHORUS

What in the world will he use him for?

DICAEOPOLIS

He'll be an altogether useful vessel,
A mixing bowl of evils, mortar of lawsuits,
Lampstand to denounce audited officials and a cup
For stirring up troubles.

CHORUS

How might somebody have been persuaded
To use such a vessel

At home
When he's always sounding so much?

DICAEOPOLIS

He's strong, good fellow, so
He'd never break, even if
He should be hung upside down by his feet!

CHORUS

[*To the Theban*] Now it's all set for you beautifully!

THEBAN

I'm going to reap a harvest!

CHORUS

Well, best of strangers, reap away,
And take him and throw him wherever you want as you go,
[Useful] for everything—a sycophant is!

DICAEOPOLIS

Only with difficulty did I get him packaged up, the bastard!
Here, take your pottery, Boeotian!

THEBAN

Come and lower your shoulder, Ismenias.

DICAEOPOLIS

And see that you'll carry him off with due caution.
In any case you'll carry nothing healthy or sound, but
    still and all . . .
And if you profit by taking this cargo,
You'll be well-off,[169] as far as sycophants are concerned, at any rate!

169. Or "happy."

LAMACHUS'S MESSENGER

Dicaeopolis!

DICAEOPOLIS

Who[170] is it? Why are you calling out for me?

MESSENGER

Why?

Lamachus has ordered you, for this drachma here,
To give him some of your thrushes for the Pitchers festival[171]
And he's ordered you [to give him], for three drachmas, an eel
from Copais.

DICAEOPOLIS

Which Lamachus is this—an *eel?!?*

MESSENGER

The terrible, the bull's-hide-shield-bearer,
Who brandishes the Gorgon
While shaking "three o'ershadowing crests."[172]

DICAEOPOLIS

No, by Zeus, not even if he should give me his shield!
But let him shake his crests for salt-fish,
And if he puts up a fuss, I'll call the market-regulators!
But as for me, I'll take this merchandise for myself

---

170. Reading, with the principal MSS, "who" (*tis*) rather than "what" (*ti*) of the Budé.

171. Or Choes festival, celebrated on the second of the three days of the Anthesteria, at the sanctuary of Dionysus. The festival of the Pots (*Chytroi*) was celebrated on the final day.

172. From Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes* 384.

And I'll go in, accompanied by wings of thrushes and blackbirds.

CHORUS

You saw, O City Entire, the prudent man, super-wise,
And the sorts of imported goods he has to sell to others, because he concluded the treaty,
Some goods useful in the household, some, in turn, fit to gulp down straight from the fire.
All good things are spontaneously supplied him!
Never will I welcome War into my home,
Nor will he ever sing the Harmodius[173] [song], reclining alongside me,
Because the man's naturally a drunkard
Whose riotous revelry burst in on those possessed of everything good
And wrought everything bad, continually overturning and spilling
And fighting; and, in addition, when I repeatedly proposed that he
"Drink, lie down, take this cup of friendship,"
Still all the more did he torch with fire our vine props[174]
And violently did he spill the wine from our vines.

[*Dicaeopolis comes out of his house and discards the feathers from the birds he is preparing*]

173. Harmodius and Aristogeiton were popularly credited with the assassination of Hipparchus, son of Peisistratus, and so with bringing the rule of tyranny in Athens to an end. The Chorus thus refers to a popular drinking song in honor of Harmodius.

174. The Peloponnesians made regular incursions into Athenian territory to destroy crops and vines.

He's all in a flutter over the dinner and at the same time is thinking big thoughts indeed,
And as indication of his manner of life he's cast out from his doors these feathers.

[*A young woman appears on stage, accompanied by female attendants*]

O You who were reared together with Cypris[175] the beautiful and the Graces dear, O Reconciliation,
It escaped notice how beautiful is your face!
How might some Eros take hold of me and you and bring us together,
Like the Eros depicted in the painting,[176] wearing a wreath of flowers?
Or do you regard me as being very much a little old man, perhaps?
But if I got hold of you, I think, at least, I'd still bang you three times over!
First I'd plow a long row of young vine,
Then, alongside that, fresh shoots of fig-slips,
And, third, a row of grapevines, this old man here would!
And all around the entire field, olive trees
So that, from them, we'd anoint ourselves, you and I, for the New Moon day! [177]

175. That is, Aphrodite.

176. According to the scholiast, this refers to a painting of Eros by Zeuxis, located in a temple of Aphrodite in Athens.

177. That is, the first day of the month, which was a holiday and so associated with private and public rites, as well as being a market day; see *Knights* 43–44.

HERALD

Hear ye, People! In accord with the traditional ways,
Begin drinking from the pitchers at the sound of the trumpet. And
he who drinks it down
First out of everyone, he'll get the wineskin full of . . . Ctesiphon![178]

DICAEOPOLIS

O Boys![179] O Women! Didn't you hear?
What are you doing? Don't you hear the herald?
Braise, roast well, rotate, pull off
The hares, quick! String the wreaths!
Bring the skewers, so I may put the thrushes on a spit!

CHORUS

I envy you your good counsel
And more your cheerful feasting,
My fellow,[180] here and now.

DICAEOPOLIS

What then, when the thrushes
You see are roasting?

CHORUS

I think this too that you say is good!

DICAEOPOLIS

[*To a servant*] Stir up the fire!

---

178. Identity unknown. Some suggest he must have been a heavy drinker, others that he was overweight and so had a belly resembling a full wineskin (for the latter, consider *Clouds* 1237–38).

179. That is, "Slaves!"

180. Literally, "human being."

CHORUS

Did you hear how gourmet-ily
How both refinedly and dine-tastically
He serves himself?

FARMER

Ah, wretched me!

DICAEOPOLIS

O Heracles! Who's *this?!?*

FARMER

An unhappy man!

DICAEOPOLIS

Well, keep your unhappiness to yourself.

FARMER

Dearest fellow, since the treaty is yours alone,
Measure out some peace for me, even if only five years' worth!

DICAEOPOLIS

What's happened to you?

FARMER

I'm ruined because I lost my two oxen!

DICAEOPOLIS

From where?

FARMER

From Phyle[181] the Boeotians took them!

---

181. A remote Athenian deme "on the most direct road from Athens to Thebes" (Olson ad loc.) and hence liable to Boeotian raids.

DICAEOPOLIS

O thrice-ill-starred fellow—and you're wearing white?!?[182]

FARMER

And by Zeus these used to support me
With all manner of manure!

DICAEOPOLIS

So what are you in need of right now?

FARMER

I've ruined my eyes crying for my two oxen!
But if you have any care for [me,] Dercetes of Phyle,
Anoint my eyes with peace, quick!

DICAEOPOLIS

But, you rascal, I don't happen to be a public servant!

FARMER

Come now, I beseech you—if somehow I may get my two oxen back.

DICAEOPOLIS

There's no way, but go cry to Pittalus's people.[183]

FARMER

But, for me, just one drop of peace
Drip into this tube here!

182. The surprise comes from the fact that mourners should wear black.

183. Apparently a public doctor; thus here his students or associates. See also 1222 below.

DICAEOPOLIS

Not even the least [little droplet], but go off somewhere, off toward home.

FARMER

Oh, wretched me, my two little oxen from the farm!

CHORUS

The man has discovered
In the treaty something pleasant, and
It seems he'll share it with no one.

DICAEOPOLIS

[*To his servants*] Baste the sausage with honey.
Grill the cuttlefish!

CHORUS

[*To the audience*] Did you hear his commanding tone?

DICAEOPOLIS

Broil the eels!

CHORUS

You're killing me and the neighbors with hunger,
And with the smoky savor
And with your voice, ordering such things!

DICAEOPOLIS

Broil these here, and brown those ones beautifully!

BEST MAN

Dicaeopolis!

DICAEOPOLIS

Who is it? Who is it?

BEST MAN

A certain bridegroom sent this meat here to you
From the wedding feast.

DICAEOPOLIS

Nobly done, whoever it was.

BEST MAN

And he bade you, for the meat—
So that he'd not go out on campaign, but could stay home and screw—
To pour out one ladleful of peace into the vial.

DICAEOPOLIS

Take it away, take away the meat and don't give it to me,
Because I wouldn't pour any for a thousand drachmas!
But . . . who's this girl here?

BEST MAN

The bridesmaid
Needs to say something to you alone about the bride.

DICAEOPOLIS

Come now, what is it you're saying? [*She whispers in his ear*] How funny, O Gods,
Is the bride's request, which she asks me so intently—
That her groom's cock stay at home!
[*To a servant*] Bring the treaty here, so I may give some to her alone,
Since a woman doesn't deserve[184] the war.

184. Following the suggestion of a modern scholar, the Budé reads "A woman isn't the cause [*aitia*] of the war," but the principal MSS have instead "deserve" (*axia*). See also Edmunds, "Aristophanes' *Acharnians*," 22 n. 69.

[*To the bridesmaid*] Hold the container under here this way, O woman.
Do you know how this is done? Explain this to the bride:
Whenever they're enlisting soldiers, with this [*pointing to the contents of the vial*]
At night let the groom's cock be polished!

[*Best Man and Bridesmaid leave*]

[*To a servant*] Take away the treaty, bring the wine decanter
So I may get the wine and pour it into the pitchers.

CHORUS

And now this fellow here, whoever he is, with knitted brows
Is making haste, resembling somebody with a terrible announcement.

HERALD

O toils and battles and Lamachuses![185]

LAMACHUS

Who is crashing about my bronzed-bedecked halls?

HERALD

The generals command you to go today
Quickly, taking your ambushes and crests,[186]
And then to watch over the points of entry as it snows.

185. The word for "Lamachuses" (*lamachōn*) contains the word for "battles" (*machōn*); see also n. 56 above.

186. The word for "crests" (*lophōn*) is close to that for "ambushes" (*lochōn*); see also n. 96 above.

For someone has reported to them that, during their Pitchers and
Pots festivals,[187]
Boeotian bandits will invade!

DICAEOPOLIS

Ah, generals—more numerous than good.

LAMACHUS

Isn't it terrible that I'm not permitted even to celebrate the
festival?

DICAEOPOLIS

Ah, the war-battling-Lamachian campaign! 1080

LAMACHUS

Ah, wretched me! Now you're ridiculing me!

DICAEOPOLIS

Do you want to do battle with the four-winged Geryon?[188]

LAMACHUS

Alas,
Such news the herald has brought me!

DICAEOPOLIS

Alas, what news from this messenger running toward *me,* in turn?

MESSENGER

Dicaeopolis!

---

187. That is, the festivals of the Pitchers and Pots celebrated as part of the Anthesteria, in honor of Dionysus and Hermes.

188. Geryon was a triple-bodied monster killed by Heracles—though commentators puzzle over the mention here of "four-winged."

DICAEOPOLIS

What is it?

MESSENGER

To dinner
Go quickly, bringing the basket and pitcher.
For the priest of Dionysus sends for you.
Just be quick: you've been holding up dinner for a long while now!
All else is provided for:
Couches, tables, head pillows, blankets,
Wreaths, perfume, delicacies—whores alongside—
Pastries, flat cakes, sesame snacks, crackers,
Dancing girls, "the things dearest to Harmodius."[189]
Just hurry along as quickly as possible!

[*Exit Messenger*]

LAMACHUS

Unhappy me!

DICAEOPOLIS

For in fact you drew the Gorgon large [on your shield].
[*To a servant*] Lock up and have someone pack my dinner.

LAMACHUS

Boy, boy, bring my rucksack out here!

DICAEOPOLIS

Boy, boy, bring my basket out here!

189. From the popular drinking song mentioned above; see. n. 173.

LAMACHUS

Bring the seasoned salt, boy, and onion!

DICAEOPOLIS

To me the sliced fish—for I loathe onions!

LAMACHUS

Bring me here, boy, a fig-leaf wrapped 'round stale pickled fish!

DICAEOPOLIS

And to me, boy, a fig-leaf: I'll cook [the fish] there.

LAMACHUS

Bring the two plumes from my helmet there.

DICAEOPOLIS

And to me bring the doves and the thrushes!

LAMACHUS

Beautiful and white is the ostrich's plume!

DICAEOPOLIS

Beautiful and browned is the flesh of the dove!

LAMACHUS

Human being, stop ridiculing my armaments!

DICAEOPOLIS

Human being, do you mind ceasing to look at my thrushes?!?

LAMACHUS

Bring out the crest case with the triple crests!

DICAEOPOLIS

And bring me the dish with the rabbit meat!

LAMACHUS

Ah! Have moths eaten my crests?!?

DICAEOPOLIS

Ah! Will I eat up the rabbit stew before dinner?!?

LAMACHUS

Human being, do you mind not addressing me?

DICAEOPOLIS

No, [I'm not,] but for a long time the slave and I've been wrangling.

[*To the slave*] Do you want to make a wager and leave it to Lamachus to judge

Which is more pleasant, locusts or thrushes?

LAMACHUS

Ah! How insolent you are!

DICAEOPOLIS

He judges locusts to be very much more so!

LAMACHUS

Boy, boy! Come and bring the spear to me here!

DICAEOPOLIS

Boy, boy! Pull off the sausage and bring it here!

LAMACHUS

Come, let me pull off the case from the spear.

Here, hang on to it, boy!

DICAEOPOLIS

And you, boy, hold on to *this* [*hands him one end of the skewer*].

LAMACHUS

Bring me the stand, boy, for my shield!

DICAEOPOLIS

And for my [stomach], bring out the loaves of bread![190]

LAMACHUS

Bring here my shield, Gorgon-embossed and round.

DICAEOPOLIS

And to me give a flat cake cheesy and round! 1125

LAMACHUS

[*To the audience*] Isn't this flat-out ridicule in the eyes of human beings?

DICAEOPOLIS

Isn't this flat cake sweet in the eyes of human beings?

LAMACHUS

Pour on the polishing oil, boy. In this bronze [of my shield]
I espy an old man going to be prosecuted for cowardice!

DICAEOPOLIS

You, pour on the honey! Here too an old man's plain to see 1130
Ordering Lamachus son of Gorgasus[191] to weep!

LAMACHUS

Bring here, boy, my warrior's corselet.

---

190. The word for "loaves of bread" (*kribanitas*) is somewhat similar to that for "stand(s)" (*killibantas*) in the previous line.

191. Presumably a play on "Gorgon"; Lamachus's father was named Xenophanes.

DICAEOPOLIS

Fetch, boy, *my* corselet—that is, my pitcher!

LAMACHUS

With this here I gird myself against my enemies!

DICAEOPOLIS

With *this* I gird myself against my fellow drinkers!

LAMACHUS

My bedding, boy, tie to the shield.

DICAEOPOLIS

My dinner, boy, tie to the basket.

LAMACHUS

And I myself will go and bring my rucksack.

DICAEOPOLIS

And I'll go get my cloak and be off!

LAMACHUS

Pick up the shield and proceed with it, boy.
It's snowing! Curses! Wintry affairs[192] . . .

DICAEOPOLIS

Pick up the dinner! Boozing-it-up affairs!

[*Exit Dicaeopolis and Lamachus*]

CHORUS

Go and fare well on campaign!
How dissimilar the paths you two are taking!

192. The word for "affairs" (*pragmata*) often means "troubles."

Drinking for the one, bedecked with a wreath,
But for you, freezing and standing on guard!
For him, going to bed
With a young maiden in her bloom
Getting his you-know-what rubbed!
Antimachus, son of Psacadus,[193] the writer, poet of tunes,
To state it with a simple account: would that Zeus utterly destroy him!
He it was who, as chorus-leader at the Lenaea, dismissed wretched me without dinner![194]
Would that I might see him still in need of squid,
And may it be grilled
And sizzling beside the sea, lying out on a table,
There beached. And then just as he's going to grab it
A dog would snatch it up and run away with it!
So this is one evil for him, and then another would come at night.
For while shivering as he walks home after a ride,
Some drunk would then crack him on the head, some lunatic Orestes,[195]

193. Since Antimachus is a common name, the identity of the fellow in question is unknown. His patronymic, as the scholiast suggests, means "sprayer" and perhaps refers to Antimachus's habit of spraying saliva when he talked. Consider also *Clouds* 1022.

194. The "chorus-leader" was a wealthy citizen whose duties included paying for the production of a play and apparently also a celebratory dinner afterward. The Chorus here is clearly not speaking as Acharnians but (once again) as a troupe of actors.

195. After killing his mother (Clytemnestra) to avenge her murder of his father (Agamemnon), Orestes wandered back to Athens, out of his mind. Here, a proverbial madman.

And he, wanting to get a stone in the darkness, would get
In his hand a freshly crapped turd instead
And holding that marble he'd rush at him
And then—missing!—he'd hit Cratinus![196]

MESSENGER

O servants who are in the home of Lamachus![197]
Water, heat water in a little pot!
Get ready bandages and salve,
Oiled wool, a dressing for his ankle!
The man's been wounded by a stick as he leapt across a ditch
And, falling backwards, he sprained his ankle!
And his head he banged on a stone as he fell,
And Gorgon he waked from his shield!
And as a great feather from a big-mouthed-boaster bird fell
On the rocks, he uttered a terrible lament:
"O Famed Eye, seeing you now for the very last time
I am leaving this light; I am . . . no more!"
Having said this much and falling into the irrigation ditch,
He rose up and, encountering [his own] men in flight,
"He expelled and drove the bandits on by the spear."
But here he is, the fellow himself! Just open the door!

[*Enter Lamachus, bandaged and limping*]

196. An Athenian comic poet against whom the young Aristophanes competed; see also 848 and following above.

197. A mockery of the language often used by messengers in tragedies.

LAMACHUS

Aaaaaah! Aaaaaaah![198]

Hateful are these chilly sufferings! Wretched me!
I am perishing, struck by an enemy's spear!
But that would be lamentable for me—
If Dicaeopolis should see me wounded
And then scoff at my misfortunes!

[*Enter Dicaeopolis, fresh from the contest, supported by two dancing-girls*]

DICAEOPOLIS

Aaaaaah! Aaaaaaah!
Ah, the titties, how firm and quince-like!
Kiss me softly, my Two Golden Ones,
Open-mouthed and amply tongued!
For I am the first to have downed the pitcher!

LAMACHUS

O you wretched confluence of my evils!
Ah, ah, how painful my wounds!

DICAEOPOLIS

Ha ha, Lamachippius, hello!

LAMACHUS

I suffer hatefully!

DICAEOPOLIS

[*To the girls*] Why are you kissing me?

198. The Budé suggests a spoof on the laments characteristic of tragedy and of Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1347 and following in particular.

LAMACHUS

I am distressed!

DICAEOPOLIS

[*To the girls*] Why are you nibbling me?

LAMACHUS

Wretched me, how grievous the encounter!

DICAEOPOLIS

Was somebody taking up contributions[199] at the Pitchers festival?!?

LAMACHUS

Oh oh! Paean Paean![200]

DICAEOPOLIS

But the Paean festival isn't today!

LAMACHUS

Take hold of me, hold my leg. Owww!
Take hold of it, friends!

DICAEOPOLIS

You two take hold of my dick, right in the middle,
Take hold of it, lady friends!

---

199. The word for "contributions" (*xumbolas*) (to a common meal) is the same as that for "encounter" in the previous line. Evidently guests were to bring their own meal (as Dicaeopolis did), but the host would supply the entertainment, and to solicit contributions to pay for it would be inappropriate. Most MSS add the phrase "in battle" at 1210, but modern editors reject it as an unmetrical and intrusive gloss.

200. Epithet of Apollo, a god responsible for healing. Lamachus thus in effect calls on the god to heal him.

LAMACHUS

I grow dizzy, struck by a stone upon the head,
And succumb to the dark . . .

DICAEOPOLIS

And I want to go to bed, with a raging hard-on,
And screw in the dark![201]

LAMACHUS

Carry me off to the doors of Pittalus,
With paeanean-healing hands!

DICAEOPOLIS

Take me to the judges! Where's the king?[202]
Give me the wine sack I'm owed!

LAMACHUS

[*As he is carried off stage*] Some spear has pierced through my bones painfully!

DICAEOPOLIS

[*Holding up his pitcher*] Look! This is empty! Hurray for the noble victor!

CHORUS

So hurray—since you invite us to do so, old man—noble victor!

---

201. The word Aristophanes coins for "screw in the dark" (*skotobiniō*) is modeled on the word translated just above as "succumb to the dark" (i.e., black out): *skotodiniō*.

202. The king, that is, of the Lenaean festival (*archon basileus*). Aristophanes-Dicaeopolis would seem to have in mind not only the wineskin but also the comedy prize.

DICAEOPOLIS

And I poured it neat and chugged it right down!

CHORUS

Hurray now, noble fellow! Take the wineskin and be on your way!

DICAEOPOLIS

Now you follow along and sing: "Hurray O Noble Victor!"

CHORUS

Well we'll follow along for your sake,
Singing "Hurray Noble Victor!"
For you and the wineskin!